

EPA Region III

Office of Public Affairs

EARLY BIRD HEADLINES

Friday, October 23 , 2009

*** MORNING HOT LIST ***

Feds serious about bay cleanup

WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE Following a Web conference Thursday with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Lycoming County officials are convinced the federal government is serious regarding a presidential order requiring states to reduce pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay. They also expressed their belief that a nutrient credit trading program can be a significant tool in achieving pollution reduction levels while creating revenue for local farmers and developers. "I am convinced more than ever of the seriousness on the federal level of these mandates to clean up the Chesapeake Bay," said Commissioner Jeff C. Wheeland. "They're real." Wheeland said a program in which farmers and developers create credits through pollution reducing practices will play a big part in meeting EPA-mandated pollution levels. The conference provided government officials throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed with an overview of an executive order issued in May by President Barack Obama. The order declares the bay a national treasure and directs the federal government to take a greater leadership role regarding its restoration. To that end, a Federal Leadership Committee was established to which federal agencies such as the EPA and Department of Agriculture were ordered to submit draft reports identifying challenges to the bay and recommended actions for addressing them. Those reports, which focused on issues such as meeting water quality goals in the bay, conservation practices, stormwater management and addressing climate change impacts, are being used to develop a strategy for cleaning up the bay. The strategy will be released for public comment on Nov. 9. During the conference, EPA official Robert A. Koroncai discussed Total Maximum Daily Load - or "TMDL" - which the agency plans to implement for each of the seven jurisdictions - including six states and the District of Columbia - in the bay watershed.

Editorial: Water pollution remains a problem

WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE A report by the environmental advocacy group PennEnvironment illustrates the folly of state lawmakers eviscerating the Department of Environmental Protection and a need for Congress to reinvigorate the Clean Water Act of 1972. PennEnvironment analyzed the federal Toxic Release Inventory for 2007 and found that industries released 2.6 million pounds of pollutants into the Susquehanna River that year. That's more than 25 percent of the 10 million pounds of industrial pollutants that were released into waterways statewide in 2007, a year in which Pennsylvania was among the top five states in total volume. The report puts a disturbing exclamation point on the new state budget, which reduces the budget for the Department of Environmental Protection by about a third. And the study is an incomplete picture because it deals with "point source" discharges alone, that is, known quantifiable discharges from known sources. It does not catalogue nonpoint source pollution such as fertilizer and animal waste the enter waterways from farms. Nor does the report deal with so-called "legacy" pollution - toxic matter deposited in the river for more than a century by mines and other industries that no longer exist. The report is drawn from existing data. It should serve as a

reminder to Harrisburg and Washington that water pollution remains an enormous problem. State lawmakers and regulators should ensure that clean water enforcement remains a priority despite the hatchet that the Legislature took to the DEP. Perhaps lawmakers can stop hoarding their own \$200 million surplus and dedicate some of it to the cause of clean water.

Pa. fines Cabot \$56K for 3 chemical spills in Susquehanna County

SCRANTON TIMES-TRIBUNE The Department of Environmental Protection has fined Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. for a series of three chemical spills in less than a week at a site in Susquehanna County where it is drilling for natural gas. The state's environmental oversight agency said Thursday that Cabot must pay \$56,650 for violating the Clean Streams Law, Solid Waste Management Act and Oil and Gas Act. Last week, the department allowed the Houston-based company to resume hydraulic fracturing of its gas wells in the county three weeks after it ordered Cabot to stop performing the process until it developed new pollution prevention and engineering plans. That order shut down the crucial step of fracturing or "fracking" the gas-rich Marcellus Shale with water, sand and chemicals that is necessary to release gas trapped in the rock. The three spills, on Sept. 16 and Sept. 22 at the Heitsman 4H well in Dimock Twp., all involved a Halliburton-brand lubricant gel mixed with water that is injected underground at high pressure to break apart the shale. About 8,400 gallons of the mixture were spilled and up to 1,900 gallons leaked into a nearby wetland and Stevens Creek. Cabot's engineering study showed that an unusually high 240-foot difference in elevation between the field of water tankers and the Heitsman well pad likely caused enough pressure to rupture pipe couplings and hoses that caused the spills. The company proposed changes to its operations to help prevent further releases.

Carbon advantage of biofuels may be overstated

WASHINGTON POST The world's policymakers and scientists have made a critical error in how they count biofuels' contribution to human-generated greenhouse-gas emissions, according to a paper published Thursday in the journal *Science*. Although the article addresses a wonkish subject -- how to measure the environmental impact of energy sources such as ethanol and wood chips, which absorb carbon as they grow but release it back into the atmosphere when they're burned -- it has broad implications. The method undercounts the global-warming contribution of some bioenergy crops, the team of 13 researchers wrote, because it doesn't factor in what sort of land-use changes might occur to produce them. "We made an honest mistake within the scientific framing of the debate, and we've got to correct it to make it right," said Steven P. Hamburg, chief scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund and one of the paper's authors. When calculating the greenhouse-gas emissions limit, government officials in the United States, Europe and elsewhere do not count the carbon that biofuels release when they are burned. But carbon is released when a producer clears and burns trees, even to grow a crop destined for the biofuels market. Officials also established a legal system that limits emissions from energy use but not from land-use activities such as clearing forests.

Shale could provide natural gas

PENN STATE DAILY COLLEGIAN U.S. Rep. Glenn Thompson, R-Pa., joined the first ever United States House of Representatives Natural Gas Caucus on Wednesday, where Penn State Professor Emeritus Robert Watson was a key presenter. The main topic of interest was Marcellus Shale, a natural gas reserve that covers two-thirds of Pennsylvania. Proponents of natural gas at the caucus cited that it emits at least 50 percent less carbon dioxide than petroleum does. And with the abundance of gas found just in Pennsylvania, tapping the resource would increase the nation's security by reducing its reliance on foreign oil. Watson said past estimates of the gas reserve's potential were highly underestimated and should be reconsidered in light of modern technological improvements. "Only from the little Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we have enough natural gas to support the United States for 20 years," Watson said. Thompson said the most recent research, which came from Penn State, shows Marcellus Shale is the largest plane of natural gas in the world. Watson said the reserve has the potential to provide 150,000 new jobs in Pennsylvania, with an average salary -- from laborer to executive -- cashing in at

\$90,000. The reserve has a potential value of \$3 trillion, Watson said. That said, building an infrastructure to tap the gas comes with costs. Constructing electric lines, gas lines and artificial water management are environmentally harmful procedures. However, the benefit of reducing petroleum use outweighs the negative impacts, Watson said. To give a practical picture of the advantage of natural gas, Watson said individuals who change their engine oil every 3,000 miles would only have to change it every 50,000 miles in an engine that runs on natural gas.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Blog: Green Living: Untrashing the beach On Saturday, Clean Ocean Action is holding its annual beach clean-up in New Jersey. Apparently, there's always plenty to do. Last year, 5,163 volunteers collected 289,976 pieces of debris from 63 locations during two cleanups, held in spring and fall. The total weight was 36,041 pounds. Plastics overall pretty much always top the list of items. But as far as individual items, cigarette filters remain the most ubiquitous, smoking bans at various beaches notwithstanding. According to the 2008 annual report, the "Roster of the Ridiculous," which lists the most unusual items found, include: 1977 Bradley Beach badge in Point Pleasant, a Canoe, bottle of Holy Water, \$20 Bill, beer keg, Whole Jar of mayonnaise, containers from Asia, a refrigerator door, a vacuum, a ship brace from an old ship, a high chair, and 500 pounds of lumber. The beach sweep events are more than people picking-up trash from beaches, the nonprofit association points out. The intent is also to build community support for solutions to marine litter, as well as raises awareness about the negative impacts of litter on wildlife and the ocean.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Ten-month sewer project on Irwin's Main Street finally over Irwin business owners were reveling in the reopening of Main Street after almost 10 months of construction that ripped up the thoroughfare and diverted motorists around the business district. "We're so happy we could burst," said Kathi Hockenberry, owner of the New 2 You women and kids consignment boutique on Main Street. Sections of the one-way street were closed since early January because of the last two phases of a three-stage, \$7 million project mandated by the state government to separate Irwin's sanitary and storm sewers. After months of shifting Main Street traffic onto Oak Street, another traditional one-way road, motorists now can glide along the town's top avenue for businesses. And with more traffic coming through, business owners say, that's more people stopping in town to shop. "It's happening at the right time because November and December are when we do our most business," said Bill Waldsmith, who has run Pamela's Cards & Gifts on Main Street for 11 years. Hockenberry and Waldsmith said the road closures this year caused them to lose business because customers were less willing to come downtown amid the construction vehicles and the dust. Some parking spaces also were lost because of the construction, while several spots on Oak Street temporarily were removed to accommodate two-way traffic. While Hockenberry said her customers have been coming back steadily, Waldsmith has been concerned that he's lost shoppers seeking sports merchandise, Hallmark cards and other gifts because they have gotten in the habit of going to other stores.

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Management Act and Oil and Gas Act. Last week, the department allowed the Houston-based company to resume hydraulic fracturing of its gas wells in the county three weeks after it ordered Cabot to stop performing the process until it developed new pollution prevention and engineering plans. That order shut down the crucial step of fracturing or "fracking" the gas-rich Marcellus Shale with water, sand and chemicals that is necessary to release gas trapped in the rock. The three spills, on Sept. 16 and Sept. 22 at the Heitsman 4H well in Dimock Twp., all involved a Halliburton-brand lubricant gel mixed with water that is injected underground at high pressure to break apart the shale. About 8,400 gallons of the mixture were spilled and up to 1,900 gallons leaked into a nearby wetland and Stevens Creek. Cabot's engineering study showed that an unusually high 240-foot difference in elevation between the field of water tankers and the Heitsman well pad likely caused enough pressure to rupture pipe couplings and hoses that caused the spills. The company proposed changes to its operations to help prevent further releases.

Editorial: Cleaner water down drain A report by PennEnvironment illustrates the folly of state lawmakers eviscerating the Department of Environmental Protection and a need for Congress to reinvigorate the Clean Water Act of 1972. PennEnvironment analyzed the federal Toxic Release Inventory for 2007 and found that industries released 2.6 million pounds of pollutants into the Susquehanna River that year. That's more than 25 percent of the 10 million pounds of industrial pollutants that were released into waterways statewide in 2007. The report puts a disturbing exclamation point on the new state budget, which reduces the budget for the Department of Environmental Protection by about a third. And the study is an incomplete picture because it deals with "point source" discharges alone - that is, known sources. It does not catalogue non-point-source pollution such as fertilizer. Nor does the report deal with so-called "legacy" pollution - toxic matter deposited in the river for more than a century by mines and other industries that no longer exist.

WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE

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Commissioners pass water system funding grant to county authority A plan to provide public water to the undeveloped portion of the Muncy Industrial Park and surrounding area is ready to move forward. On Thursday, the Lycoming County commissioners approved an agreement with the Lycoming County Water and Sewer Authority that will allow a \$477,000 State and Tribal Assistance Grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency to pass from the county to the authority. The money, along with a \$923,000 state H2O grant, will pay the

total cost of making and connecting the authority's Halls Station Water System with the Borough of Muncy's water system. The connection will provide the authority with enough water to handle the near-future needs of potential development in the industrial park. According to William Kelly, deputy director of the county Department of Planning and Community Development, the project includes the installation of about 5,700 feet of pipeline and the construction of a pump station. "It's a welcome addition to our family of infrastructure," Kelly said of the project. Authority executive director Christine Maggi-Weigle recently said the project will be put out to bid later this year. Construction will begin next spring, she said. The commissioners agreed to extend for 10 months a grant agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

HAZELTON STANDARD SPEAKER

Fill proposal concerns Eachus State Rep. Todd Eachus wonders if a mine pit at Hazleton's proposed amphitheater site should have a liner and leachate treatment system before a developer fills it. The developer, Hazleton Creek Properties LLC, proposes a project to demonstrate that the pit can be filled safely with various substances, including fine materials from construction and demolition sites. Eachus, D-116, who represents the Hazleton area and is House majority leader, said landfills that take construction and demolition waste have liners and ways to collect and treat liquid that leaches through the fill. "Maybe it wasn't a landfill before, but it's about to become a landfill. This is landfill material," said Eachus, who pointed out that an application to open a landfill for construction and demolition waste in Hazle Township failed in 1998. A consultant for Hazleton Creek, Mark McClellan of Evergreen Environmental, said the project isn't a landfill and won't take material that a landfill could accept. Hazleton Creek applied to operate under regulations that the state Legislature required be established in 1986 to beneficially use waste materials, rather than dispose of them, for the advantage of the environment and the taxpayer, McClellan said. The construction and demolition materials would be sorted, crushed with heavy equipment, run through screens and tested for chemical components before being shipped to Hazleton.

Freeland sewer authority to consider new lines The Freeland Municipal Sewer and Water Authority hopes to plant new water infrastructure in a section of town that was waterless for a few days following a line break. On Sept. 26, a break in a water line in Sandy Run left about 20 residents under a boil advisory. The authority arranged for bottled water and water tanker trucks to provide water to the residents, Borough Manager Lynn Falatko said. It took three days to locate and fix the break because the pipe was plastic, she said. Residents there installed the pipe around 1999 and the authority provided the community with a holding tank, well and pump house. When the mainline broke, water flowed underground instead of bubbling to the surface. Because the pipe was plastic, the authority had a more difficult time locating where the break with equipment, Falatko said. Residents eventually sought help from Sen. Raphael Musto, asking if the authority could take over the pipe and have it replaced to avoid a future problem, she said. The authority decided to seek out grants to replace the over one-mile mainline and individual laterals going into the 20 homes.

WILKES-BARRE TIMES-LEADER

Vets have energy message SCRANTON — Veterans on the "Operation Free" bus tour were joined Thursday morning at the Lackawanna County Courthouse by Mayor Chris Doherty and a group of area veterans to advocate alternative energy sources. Doherty and representatives from the offices of U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Scranton, and U.S. Rep. Paul Kanjorski, D-Nanticoke, spoke to encourage support. The tour is sponsored by Operation Free, a coalition of veterans and national security groups working together to raise awareness about national security threats posed by climate change and the importance of building a clean energy economy that is not tied to fossil fuels. Its members support a clean energy plan that cuts carbon pollution, develops clean energy incentives, and puts Americans in control of their energy future. The organization considers climate change a threat to the U.S. military and its humanitarian efforts in providing food, water, medical services and border security.

WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE

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Congress to reinvigorate the Clean Water Act of 1972. PennEnvironment analyzed the federal Toxic Release Inventory for 2007 and found that industries released 2.6 million pounds of pollutants into the Susquehanna River that year. That's more than 25 percent of the 10 million pounds of industrial pollutants that were released into waterways statewide in 2007, a year in which Pennsylvania was among the top five states in total volume. The report puts a disturbing exclamation point on the new state budget, which reduces the budget for the Department of Environmental Protection by about a third. And the study is an incomplete picture because it deals with "point source" discharges alone, that is, known quantifiable discharges from known sources. It does not catalogue nonpoint source pollution such as fertilizer and animal waste that enter waterways from farms. Nor does the report deal with so-called "legacy" pollution - toxic matter deposited in the river for more than a century by mines and other industries that no longer exist. The report is drawn from existing data. It should serve as a reminder to Harrisburg and Washington that water pollution remains an enormous problem. State lawmakers and regulators should ensure that clean water enforcement remains a priority despite the hatchet that the Legislature took to the DEP. Perhaps lawmakers can stop hoarding their own \$200 million surplus and dedicate some of it to the cause of clean water.

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Event to promote green efforts Derek Luke said students seeking meaning in life should attend the Power Shift conference at Penn State this weekend. "Many people don't know what's important in life," said Luke, a Power Shift organizer. "They might come and realize that the environment is." Students from across the state will meet at Penn State this weekend to promote grassroots environmental efforts. The weekend's events include three workshop sessions all over campus and three keynote addresses. "There will be training about anything you would want to know about the environmental movement," Luke (senior-elementary education) said. Registration is open through Saturday afternoon for \$15. Though only 200 people were registered by Tuesday, Power Shift organizer Justine Kendall (senior-geography) said this is a common pattern with state conferences, as many attendees register at the event and not in advance. Attendees will be able to select the workshops from more than 50 topics. Some include "kicking dirty energy out of politics," "climate change and national security" and "non-violent communication strategies." Kendall said she recommends that people new to the environmental movement participate in broader workshops, adding that they can choose workshops pertinent to their major or discipline.

SHAMOKIN NEWS ITEM

DEP: Shamokin man was mining without a permit POTTSVILLE - A Shamokin man has been accused of mining coal without a license or permit by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Alfons Keefer, 45, of 713 Bear Valley Ave., attended a hearing Wednesday at the Pottsville office of DEP to discuss the allegations. DEP spokesman Tom Rathbun said Keefer is accused of mining coal silt (material that results from washing or preparing

coal) without a permit or license. He said Keefer was ordered to stop. Rathbun said DEP will continue to review the case to determine if civil penalties are warranted. He said no charges have been filed at this point against Keefer, who is cooperating with DEP officials. Attempts to reach Keefer for comment were unsuccessful. Keefer is the operator of A&G Towing, of Shamokin, who filed a complaint in June with the state Judicial Conduct Board against Magisterial District Judge John Gembic III, a shareholder in Anthracite Towing LLC. Last month, Keefer was cited by Coal Township police for harassment for allegedly yelling obscenities at Michael Garcia, of Shamokin, chief operator of Anthracite Towing. The incident occurred during a towing operation at 12:35 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, in the 1000 block of East Race Street. Police were directed by Northumberland County court officials to file the summary citation at the office of Magisterial District Judge Craig Long in Catawissa to avoid any potential conflict of interest with a judge from Northumberland County being assigned the case.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Auto plant reportedly has a buyer Fisker Automotive plans to build a plug-in hybrid car at the empty Boxwood Road plant near Newport, a decision that will give Delaware a prominent role in a government-backed reshaping of the American auto industry. A formal announcement from Fisker could come as soon as Tuesday, according to sources with knowledge of the company's plans. Fisker, a startup automaker based in Irvine, Calif., confirmed earlier this week that company representatives have met with Delaware officials and toured the Boxwood Road plant, idle since July when General Motors ended production there. The company is planning to renovate the abandoned domestic factory with proceeds from a \$359 million loan from the U.S. Department of Energy. Fisker, which expects to release its first vehicle next summer, intends to build as many as 100,000 electric hybrid sedans annually at the U.S. site, beginning in 2012. The company's decision to use the Boxwood Road factory marks a quick resurrection for the 62-year-old plant, a casualty of GM's bankruptcy and restructuring earlier this year. Gov. Jack Markell had asked Motors Liquidation Co., which is disposing of GM's unwanted properties in bankruptcy court, to keep equipment in the local plant to help market it to automakers.

Science schmience: Belief in global warming cools WASHINGTON -- Americans seem to be cooling toward global warming. Just 57 percent think there is solid evidence the world is getting warmer, down 20 points in just three years, a new poll says. And the share of people who believe pollution caused by humans is causing temperatures to rise also has taken a dip, even as the U.S. and world forums gear up for possible action against climate change. In a poll of 1,500 adults by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, released Thursday, the number of people saying there is strong scientific evidence that the Earth has gotten warmer over the past few decades is down from 71 percent in April of last year and from 77 percent when Pew started asking the question in 2006. The number of people who see the situation as a serious problem also has declined. The steepest drop has occurred during the past year, as Congress and the Obama administration have taken steps to control heat-trapping emissions for the first time and international negotiations for a new treaty to slow global warming have been under way. The poll was released a day after 18 scientific organizations wrote Congress to reaffirm the consensus behind global warming. A federal government report Thursday found that global warming is upsetting the Arctic's thermostat.

Shipshape and then it's to the recycle bin Old warships cause environmental worries. BENICIA, Calif. -- A fleet of old, rotting warships shedding toxic paint into the water near San Francisco Bay will be cleaned up and recycled under a new plan announced by federal officials Thursday. Deputy Secretary of Transportation John Porcari said the government has awarded contracts to dispose of two World War II-era cargo ships from the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet. The group of more than 70 mostly obsolete vessels in Suisun Bay has been at the center of a nearly three-year deadlock between state water regulators and the federal government, which manages the fleet. Porcari said the

ships will be cleaned in dry-dock -- not in the bay -- alleviating state officials' concerns about additional water pollution. "This is definitely big," said Bruce Wolfe, executive officer of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. "This is the start." A congressional order set a 2006 deadline to scrap more than 50 ships in the fleet, but a regulatory quagmire has kept them in place. A lack of disposal operations on the West Coast means the ships must be towed to Texas to be broken apart. Under federal law, the ships must be cleaned of invasive species clinging to their hulls before they can enter the ocean. California officials fought a Bush administration plan to clean the ships where they were anchored, arguing that the process would cause paint laden with heavy metals to flake off into the bay. They also filed suit against the federal government claiming the paint flaking off the ships as they idle put the fleet in violation of the federal Clean Water Act.

WASHINGTON D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

EPA proposal to cut Great Lakes ship emissions stirs the waters DULUTH, MINN. -- A horn blasts, seagulls screech and tourists clap as the longest ship in the Great Lakes, the 308-meter Paul R. Tregurtha, glides through Duluth's canal and heads into Lake Superior, loaded down with coal bound for Midwestern power plants. Piles of crushed limestone, salt, iron ore and coal line the shores of the Great Lakes' busiest port, destined to forge steel, de-ice roads and build skyscrapers throughout the heartland. The towering grain elevators along the harbor's shores are stuffed with wheat and soy waiting for the trip out the St. Lawrence Seaway to the Atlantic Ocean, then on to Europe, North Africa or South America. Underlying this show of commercial strength is a maritime industry many see as fragile, threatened not only by a weak economy but also by broader environmental initiatives. The emissions from these ships -- the only mode of transportation not under new federal air pollution regulations -- have been linked to increased levels of heart and lung disease.

Metro to carry out bus emission tests The Metro board authorized a \$184,528 contract Thursday for West Virginia University Research Corp. and the transit agency to conduct bus emissions testing to help the agency determine which bus type is the cleanest option. They will perform emissions testing, collect operations data and gather vehicle performance and operating cost information for a comparison among buses operating with diesel fuel, hybrid-electric propulsion systems, compressed natural gas and clean-diesel biofuels. The contract is for one year, with four one-year options contingent upon funding. Metro has about 1,500 buses; 460 are compressed natural gas, 117 are clean diesel and 50 are diesel-electric hybrids. The rest run on standard diesel.

Bat lover goes to court to stop wind farm in W.Va. Workers atop West Virginia mountain ridges are putting together 389-foot windmills with huge blades that will turn Appalachian breezes into energy. Retiree David Cowan is fighting to stop them. Because of the bats. Cowan, 72, a longtime caver who grew to love bats as he slithered through tunnels from Maine to Maui, is asking a federal judge in Maryland to halt construction of the Beech Ridge wind farm in Greenbrier County, W.Va. The lawsuit pits Chicago-based Invenergy Wind LLC against environmentalists who say the cost to nature is too great. The rare green vs. green case went to trial this week in U.S. District Court in Greenbelt. It is the first court challenge to wind power under the Endangered Species Act, lawyers on both sides say. With President Barack Obama's goal of doubling renewable energy production by 2012, wind and solar farms are rapidly expanding. As they do, battles are being waged to reach a balance between the benefits of clean energy and the impact on birds, bats and even the water supply. At the heart of the Beech Ridge case is the Indiana bat, a brownish-gray creature that weighs about as much as three pennies and, wings outstretched, measures about 8 inches. A 2005 estimate concluded there were about 457,000 of them, half as many as when they were first listed as endangered in 1967. Indiana bats hibernate in limestone caves within several miles of the wind farm, which would provide energy to tens of thousands of households. The question before the judge: Would the endangered bats fly in the path of the 122 turbines that will be built along a 23-mile stretch of

mountaintop?

Carbon advantage of biofuels may be overstated The world's policymakers and scientists have made a critical error in how they count biofuels' contribution to human-generated greenhouse-gas emissions, according to a paper published Thursday in the journal Science. Although the article addresses a wonkish subject -- how to measure the environmental impact of energy sources such as ethanol and wood chips, which absorb carbon as they grow but release it back into the atmosphere when they're burned -- it has broad implications. The method undercounts the global-warming contribution of some bioenergy crops, the team of 13 researchers wrote, because it doesn't factor in what sort of land-use changes might occur to produce them. "We made an honest mistake within the scientific framing of the debate, and we've got to correct it to make it right," said Steven P. Hamburg, chief scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund and one of the paper's authors. When calculating the greenhouse-gas emissions limit, government officials in the United States, Europe and elsewhere do not count the carbon that biofuels release when they are burned. But carbon is released when a producer clears and burns trees, even to grow a crop destined for the biofuels market. Officials also established a legal system that limits emissions from energy use but not from land-use activities such as clearing forests.

We can afford to save the planet Here is the good news on the climate front: The Europeans have ratcheted down their emissions targets, the Chinese are getting serious about solar power and energy efficiency, and Washington is lumbering toward a carbon cap. These are steps toward the long-held goal: cutting global warming pollution 80 percent by 2050. Such cuts would stabilize the thickness of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide blanket surrounding the planet at 450 parts per million (ppm) and, we've been told, ensure that the global average temperature increase would not exceed 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) from 1990 levels. The bad news? Turns out that 450 ppm is so 2005. In the past four years, climate scientists, led by NASA's James Hansen, have dramatically altered the goal. To avoid the collapse of the continental ice-sheets and a dangerous rise in sea levels, many scientists are now saying we have to get down to 350 ppm, and quickly. This means what was already a heroic (and to many, impossible) target has become mind-boggling. Reaching 350 ppm would require a 97 percent reduction in emissions, entailing a complete conversion to renewable energy systems by mid-century, with the world economy virtually free of carbon emissions. Such a goal is far more demanding than any of the leading policy proposals under discussion

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

State takes lead in saving bats CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Ten years ago, federal wildlife officials took a dim view of the way West Virginia protected endangered bats near its coal mines. That was then. Today, the feds urge other states to manage their bats the way West Virginia does. "This shows what you can accomplish when you work with the federal government and start having some success," said Bob Fala, an environmental resources analyst for the state Department of Environmental Protection. The U.S. Department of the Interior recently released a plan to protect the endangered Indiana bat for the 13 states where the species is known to live. The guidelines closely paralleled those developed in West Virginia nearly three years before. The similarities were anything but accidental. "There were nine people on the team that drafted those guidelines, and two of us were from West Virginia -- me, and Christy Johnson-Hughes of the West Virginia Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," Fala said

Blog: Sen. Byrd upgraded to 'on the fence' on climate bill West Virginia's two U.S. senators are both now listed as being "on the fence" on the climate change bill, according to the latest tally by E&E News in a story, *On the Road to 60, Senate Swells with Fence Sitters*. In this story, my buddy Darren Samuelson upgraded Sen. Byrd (and Republican Sen. George Voinovich of Ohio) from the "probably not" camp to being on the

fence. He wrote: *Byrd has long questioned action to curb emissions but has taken a lead role on carbon sequestration language that Kerry and Boxer are trying to wrap into their proposal. Voinovich has a reputation for bipartisan consensus building, and recent signals supporting the nuclear power industry are raising hopes in some sectors that the retiring senator should still be considered in play*

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. Va.)

W.Va. mining activists lock selves to coal truck QUARRIER, W.Va. (AP) - Climate Ground Zero says eight of its activists have been arrested in a mountaintop removal mining protest near Quarrier. State Police did not immediately have information because officers at the scene had poor radio reception. But a spokeswoman for the environmental activists say four protesters who locked themselves to a coal truck were arrested Thursday, along with four others who unfurled banners. The protesters say they were on private property, but it's unclear which coal company owns the land. The group checked with the state Department of Environmental Protection and neighbors, but no one could tell them who owns the site. Climate Ground Zero, based in Rock Creek, says the protesters will remain until police remove them

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Commentary: Rising seas, rising awareness Here's an idea: Why don't the residents of Smith Island - at the fragile center of the Chesapeake Bay - rent a few scuba-diving suits and hold a town hall meeting under water? Scientists say a huge part of the Chesapeake region could be below water in a few decades due to rapid global warming. So why not practice up? Just grab a few wetsuits and goggles and rehearse for the aquatic life to come. A similar rehearsal took place last week in another island area: the archipelago nation of the Maldives in the Indian Ocean. Sitting at underwater tables, atop underwater chairs with fish darting about, the country's president and Cabinet ministers held a "global warming summit" to ask the world to stop the rising seas that could eventually submerge their entire country. But as TV networks broadcast this bizarre meeting back to the U.S., you could almost hear the "tsk, tsk." We comfortable Americans tend to view really big catastrophes - things like famines and tsunamis - as far-away matters involving people usually too poor or under-educated to plan better. This mindset helped blind us to the pre-Hurricane Katrina dangers of New Orleans. And it's blinding us today to the shared threat of climate change in places like Smith Island, not to mention Manhattan Island and most of south Florida. Smith Island - just 80 miles east of the White House in the main stem of the Chesapeake - is home to 300 fishermen, artists, boat-builders, shopkeepers and retirees. The island covers four square miles and is, on average, less than 2 feet above sea level.

Blog: What would make you buy a plug-in electric car? USA Today writes today from Detroit, where a three-day conference is going on about the future of plug-in hybrid electric cars. The big question going around is: Who would buy one? The consensus among industry people and observers is no one, unless they're fun. Fun? Wouldn't the answer be people who 1)care about the planet and 2)care about saving gas and 3)have a lot of extra money to spend and 4)don't have a super long commute. But maybe the thrill is the No. 1 thing for drivers. That would explain sports cars capable of going 50 miles over the speed limit. And maybe even Nascar. The car guys did acknowledge that the plug-ins would be expensive, at least until the cars are bought in large numbers. And that people wouldn't want them if they couldn't rely on them to make it from home to work. So, what would make you buy one of these plug-ins?

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

Report to offer help on water system MARDELA SPRINGS -- A study by a local engineering firm on the town's aging infrastructure is expected to be ready for review before the end of the year. Representatives from Salisbury-

based George, Miles & Buhr addressed Mardela Springs Commissioners during a special night meeting this week. Commission President Jerrold Marshall said in August that commissioners began investigating the possibility of getting U.S. Department of Agriculture grant funding to create a preliminary engineering report. "We're the only incorporated town in Wicomico County and in the state that doesn't have water and sewer," he said. Amanda Pollack, vice president of GMB, said the engineering report will include options for sewer collection, wastewater disposal, wastewater treatment and water systems. Three-fourths of the cost for the study will be paid using USDA grants. "Part of what (the) USDA always wants to see with these feasibility studies is that we've exhausted every alternative," she said. "Some of the things we will be looking into will probably not be cost-effective, but we'll need to detail them anyway."

Delaware deer harvest drops 20 percent MILLSBORO -- The annual deer harvest is down nearly 20 percent this year due to inclement weather that has kept hunters and their prey seeking shelter, authorities say. The muzzleloader season, which coincided with the recent nor'easter, was particularly affected. A total of 1,423 deer were bagged from Oct. 9-17 -- a decrease of 14 percent compared to last year. Pam Hess, who operates Mark's Deer Cutting in Millsboro with her husband, said she has dressed the same number of deer as last year despite the weather. "But when it rains like that, either the hunters don't hunt or the deer don't move," she said. Joe Rogerson, a biologist with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Division of Fish and Wildlife, said the muzzleloader season opened with unseasonable warmth and ended with torrential rains. Neither condition is favorable to hunters. "They prefer not to hunt in warm weather because they have to get the animal into a refrigeration unit really quickly," he said. Just like humans, DNREC spokesman Michael Globetti said deer are inactive during bad weather.

CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

Taneytown officials: Water is safe to drink A common bacteria has been found in Taneytown's water system. However, city and state officials say the water is safe to drink. The coliform bacteria was found in the water system in September, according to the Maryland Department of Environment, but as of testing in October, the bacteria was no longer present. Taneytown Public Works Director Rick Weaver said in a statement that the water is safe for drinking, but that people with specific health concerns should consult their physicians. Coliform bacteria are found almost everywhere, according to Jon Richardson, water quality supervisor for the Carroll County Health Department. "It's a naturally occurring bacteria," he said. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states that the presence of coliform bacteria can mean that the water system is contaminated with other germs. Jay Apperson, spokesman for MDE, said the water samples were also tested for E. coli, and were negative for those bacteria. Water testing results are reported to MDE. The city is required to notify MDE when it has water that tests positive for bacteria, Apperson said. The city states that the contamination is most likely from work on the water pipes as part of the Taneytown Streetscape project.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Md.)

Hotel owner pleads guilty in carbon monoxide case The owner of an Ocean City boardwalk hotel where a carbon monoxide leak sickened several people over the summer has pleaded guilty to failure to provide carbon monoxide detectors. Salvatore Rinaldi, owner of the Americana Hotel, pleaded guilty to the 10 counts on Thursday in Ocean City District Court. He also agreed to donate \$10,000 to the Ocean City Fire Department to help with its CO detector outreach programs. On Aug. 11, the Americana was evacuated after high levels of carbon monoxide were detected in the building. According to the Ocean City Fire Marshal's Office, CO detectors were not installed in the hotel's rooms

VIRGINIA

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT

Isle of Wight hopes to part ways with SPSA The rural county, one of eight members of the troubled waste authority, has asked for instructions on how to exit SPSA before its contract expires in 2018. "The thinking was, 'Hey, let's see if we can do this,' " Don Robertson, a deputy county administrator, said this week. "There's a presumption that we have to stay in this. And we want to see if there's another route to take." Chesapeake tried a similar escape in 2006, to no avail. Unlike the quiet approach attempted this time by Isle of Wight County, Chesapeake sued the Southeastern Public Service Authority, citing concerns about mismanagement, governance and disagreements over out-of-state waste shipments. A judge ruled against the city in September 2006, saying it had to abide by a 1983 contract with SPSA for better or for worse. Rowland "Bucky" Taylor, executive director of SPSA, said Thursday that Isle of Wight County is entitled to withdraw early from the regional agency but would still be responsible for repaying its share of outstanding debts through 2018. SPSA owes about \$225 million. The agency expects to sell one of its biggest assets, a trash-burning power plant in Portsmouth, to a private bidder later this year for \$150 million and other concessions. Another company has offered to buy SPSA outright for \$331 million in cash and borrowed money. In the meantime, residents of six communities served by SPSA - Norfolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Franklin, Southampton County and Isle of Wight County - are paying the highest trash-disposal rates in the country, at \$170 per ton of refuse.

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Wittman presses drywall resolution Newport News - The day after visiting Newport News homes believed to contain Chinese drywall, Rep. Rob Wittman asked for a quick resolution on an investigation into the imported drywall. Wittman, R-Westmoreland, sent a letter Wednesday to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission chairman urging a speedy end to the inquiry into the scope and impact of Chinese drywall. The investigation was set to wrap up at the end of October, but that was postponed until November. Residents are waiting for the commission's report to find out if they're eligible for state and federal assistance programs, loan modifications, insurance policy changes, tax deductions and other aid. On Tuesday, Wittman toured several Hollymeade Village town homes that residents say contain drywall imported from China.

Dredging, new Coliseum roof on wish list HAMPTON - "Reinhard Witiak lives near a channel of the Hampton River, which he describes as a plugged-up toilet. The channels have silted in so much that rainwater can't flush out the sediment, he said. Dredging is a benefit ecologically and for boat navigation, he said. So if the city spends any money on capital projects, Witiak believes it should at least spend the \$2.2million budgeted to dredge the Hampton River and its tributaries. He was one of almost 100 people who attended a meeting Thursday night at the Hampton Roads Convention Center to talk about major construction projects in the city's Capital Improvement Plan. About a third of the attendees were city employees on hand to explain \$239million in construction projects scheduled for the next five years. Projects range from a new pre-K-8 school in Buckroe to a rebuilt Old Hampton Community Center. The catch is that the city isn't able to borrow as much money as city leaders anticipated when the current budget was passed. The city's ability to issue bonds, which is a loan similar to a homeowner taking on a mortgage, depends on the value of all real estate in the city

LYNCHBURG NEWS AND ADVANCE

City streams benefit from volunteers For the health of Blackwater Creek and its watershed, it's a start. That's the emphasis placed by organizers on this week's project to clean up and improve water quality in the huge watershed that empties into the James River. Throughout the week, hundreds of volunteers have said the creek and its many tributaries are important to Lynchburg and to the river, which is the city's chief natural resource. The project, known as Extreme Stream Makeover, is sponsored by the James River Association. The effort involves more than a half-dozen projects along or near streams. The projects, such as planting stream buffers along Ivy Creek in Peakview Park and improving a storm-water retention pond at the Wards Crossing shopping center, ultimately will improve water quality in the streams. Volunteers are also working to restore stream banks, pick up trash and plant rain gardens that filter out pollutants from storm water before it enters the streams. Those projects are being carried out at Peakview Park, along Wards Road and at Jefferson Forest High School.

MISCELLANEOUS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fewer believe in global warming WASHINGTON -- Americans seem to be cooling toward global warming. Just 57 percent think there is solid evidence that the world is getting warmer, down 20 points in just three years, a new poll says. In a poll of 1,500 adults by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, released yesterday, the number of people saying there is strong scientific evidence that the Earth has gotten warmer over the past few decades is down from 71 percent in April of last year and from 77 percent in 2006, when Pew started asking the question. The number of people who see the situation as a serious problem also has declined. The steepest drop has occurred in the past year, as Congress and the Obama administration have taken steps to control heat-trapping emissions for the first time, and international negotiations for a new treaty to slow global warming have been under way. At the same time, there has been mounting scientific evidence of climate change, from melting ice caps to the world's oceans hitting the highest monthly recorded temperatures this summer.

OSU experts discuss sweet sorghum use in ethanol CHICKASHA, Okla. -- With demand growing for ethanol produced from sources other than corn, researchers at Oklahoma State University said Wednesday that state agriculture producers could someday grow sweet sorghum or switchgrass as cash crops. Division scientists and engineers from OSU's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources spoke during a "biofuels field day" at the university's South Central Research Station in Chickasha about the potential of crops that could be grown by Oklahoma farmers for use in ethanol production. Little sweet sorghum is grown in Oklahoma because there hasn't been much need for it, said Danielle Bellmer, a food process engineer at OSU's Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center who talked enthusiastically Wednesday about the plant's potential as a renewable energy crop.